It is certain that they are perfectly aware of this peculiarity. When one does not understand them and asks them to repeat, they exaggerate maliciously, and more each time, the style that is particular to them, and when one desists, discouraged, they laugh and exchange jokes. They have succeeded. This is especially true of young women who do not yet have children, and of young concubines. The mothers and older women stress these differences less, although one also finds them among this group upon occasion. Besides, the young women like the society of children and adolescents, play and joke constantly with them; and it is the women who take care of the animals in that very human way peculiar to certain South American Indians. All this contributes to creating a special atmosphere around the women, in the interior of the group, at the same time child-like, happy, affected and provocative, in which the men participate when they return from the hunt or the gardens.

But a completely different attitude is manifested among the women when they are to undertake some one of the forms of activity which are especially intrusted to them. They accomplish their tasks as artisans with ability and patience, in the solitary camp, arranged in a circle and with their backs to one another, and, during trips they valiantly carry the heavy basket which contains the provisions and riches of the whole family and the quiver of arrows, while the husband walks ahead with the bow and one or two arrows, the wooden spear or the digging implement, looking for the flight of an animal or a fruit tree. One sees these women then, the forehead bound with the tump line, the back completely covered by the wide basket in the form of an inverted bell, walking for kilometers with their characteristic step: [58] the thighs very tense, the knees together, the ankles turned out, the feet turned in; leaning on the outer edge of the foot and moving the hips, courageous, energetic and gay. We give on the opposite page a chart of the division of tasks between the sexes, but this division should be interpreted in a less strict manner than usual for phenomena of this type. Among the Nambikwara collaboration between husband and wife is carried so far that many tasks are done jointly. More exactly, if the man rarely intervenes in feminine tasks, the woman on the other hand (and above all the supplementary wives in case of polygamy) unceasingly aid their husband. We have indicated by crosses between parentheses the cases where a task attributed to one sex is occasionally practiced by the other. Thus, when they are alone or among themselves, the men do the carrying, but they do not carry from the forehead (xenaʔkititu, a).

L. Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 SP17 Nambicuara SP17

[End Plate I]

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1. Characteristic aspect of the savannah during the dry season. 2. A native garden in the middle of the gallery forest. 3. Travelling.

1: Lévi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1948 SP17 Nambicuara SP17

[End Plate II]

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1-2. At the site of the semi-permanent village of group A1 (cf. p. 46). 3. Forced halt on the road by the same village (cf. p. [illegible]).

4: Oberg E-5 (1949)1953
SP17 Nambicuara SP17

000 old Paresí Indian village site on the west bank of the Papagaio. It is a division point in the telegraph line, and besides the telegraph operator there is a section boss and a number of Paresí Indian linemen. As the Nambicuara take whatever wire they feel they need, the linemen are kept busy repairing the line. There are 12 houses in the settlement proper with the buildings of the Protestant Mission forming one end of the town and the buildings of the Jesuit Mission forming the other.

[316]

The line boss, who is also the mayor of the town, gave Kazro and me a two-room mud-and-wattle house as our quarters. Our meals we took with the two American missionary families. The Catholic Mission was under the charge of Father Roberto, a Frenchman, and Father João, an Austrian. In addition, there were three sisters in charge of a school. The priests had developed extensive fields of manioc and rice, irrigating the fields by diverting water from the river. They had also set up an electric-light plant, using water as a source of power. There are tremendous possibilities for power development, for Utiarity Falls, situated some half a mile distant, has a drop of about 240 feet. Unfortunately this power resource is located in a practically uninhabited, semiarid region.

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The Rev. L. W. Buckman, who has been in the area since 1941, kindly consented to prepare a pack train, using the mission oxen and mules, to go in search of the nearest band of Nambicuara. On the third day after our arrival when our preparations were well along, however, a band of Nambicuara came to Utiarity. In fact they were able to get a ride on João Tapuya's trucks as he was returning from Burity, the end of the truck road. This was Julio's band of some 18 people known by the Nambicuara as the Wakiltisu. Their purpose was to bring one of their men who had running syphilis sores to the Jesuit Mission for treatment. This changed our plans, for we now had one of the four Eastern Nambicuara bands in camp, which would give us plenty to do for the limited period of our visit. Also during the first week, Father João returned from the Iranxe village, bringing five men, and offered to assist us in gathering whatever information we could get from them. This we found to be very difficult, as the Iranxe spoke no Portuguese and the mis-

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361 [226] We do not know yet what determines these shifts to nearby locations; they may perhaps be caused by the death of an [748] Indian or by some communal misfortune. The distances involved are so small that the moves could not possibly derive from any significant ecological changes.

342 In order to keep rain water from seeping underneath the thatch, the Tagnani and Tawite Indians cover the inner ground perimeter of their conical huts with a series of overlapping plates made of jatobá shells.

The rain does not leak in.

354 It would not be fair to imagine the interior of the huts as hot and stuffy; air penetrates freely in between the leaves.

Nevertheless, the situation changes when the Indians light their small fires. Happily for them, the thatch is sufficiently permeable to keep their eyes free from the grave diseases often encountered among primitive peoples whose dwellings are smoky.

352 Household furnishings are rudimentary; except for the grids mentioned above and a few large pots, nothing else might properly be termed a piece of furniture. All other objects are tools, artifacts, [751] weapons and ornaments [227] [plates p. 222] which they carry with them on every journey, no matter how brief. Only the heavier mortars and graters, which cannot be carried easily, are left in the hut. These barbarians in turn could say: "Omnia mea mecum porto" [everything that is mine I carry with me].

Straw pallets, cured hides, hammocks, sleeping platforms, cots and true beds represent types of bedding characteristic of different stages of civilization.

513 The use of pallets already indicates a certain degree of advancement; but the Nambicuara have no bed other than the earth. They sleep on the bare ground.

They did not possess the hammock, that inseparable companion of their neighbors the Paresi; now that they are acquainted with it, they hold it in high regard. It was difficult to obtain any rest among them during the night; no sooner had we set up our hammock than three or four candidates would appear... And once they had taken over, it was hard to get it back. We were frequently awakened by Indians who forcibly asserted their desire to sleep in the hammocks we occupied.

[245] The Tagnani also use a kind of fish trap.

A rare type of blunt arrow is designed for the capture of birds which serve as playmates to Nambicuara children.

The birds are felled by the impact and caught easily. Some become used to their cruel captivity: a woodpecker (Colaptes campestris, Vieil) was occasionally imprisoned by a boy under a gourd. No sooner did the child remove the cup than the bird, instead of flying away, would perch upon him. It is true that the Indian nourishes his domesticated birds very well: he constantly feeds them from his own mouth, gently gorging them.

[Fig. 59]

To our intense surprise, as the cephalic measurements of an Anunze woman were being taken, a baby rat fell from the nape of her neck where it had apparently been living comfy, hiding in her hair as in the grass where it was born.

Doves (Chamepelia talpacoti), young vultures (Sarcoramphus papa, Catharista atratus brasiliensis, Bonap), monkeys and small owls are also domesticated in the Serra do Norte.

Before the days of the Rondon Commission, the Nambicuara were not familiar with the ox, the mule or the dog. They are still afraid of the ox because of its horns; they have a liking for the donkey, whose meat they find similar to that of the tapir.

[246] They are now good friends of the dog, which at first frightened them greatly; they steal a few whenever they can, and these dogs quickly take a fancy to [the Indians] because they are so well fed. In the master's eating gourd there is always room for the dog's muzzle.

They carry their children in a strap slung over the shoulder and across the chest, which the Cocozu make with straw and the others with cotton.

They take along everything they own on the shortest excursions; this is a nomadic habit surviving among a nearly sedentary people.

A population as large as that of the Serra do Norte would be unable to subsist exclusively on hunting and fishing. The Indians would be forced to travel far and wide in search of food; they would have been annihilated long ago, or else deprived of those characteristics which only their isolation could maintain.